

AAPSNews

News, features, profiles and activities in The Ann Arbor Public Schools

Information meeting
Ann Arbor school Trustees Glenn Nelson and Irene Patalan will talk about the roles and responsibilities of school board members at an informal information session at 5:30 p.m. Wednesday, June 30 at the Balas Administration Building, 2555 S. State St. The meeting is for those interested in running for the board. On Nov. 2, five residents will be elected to the Board of Education.

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More stories, photos and videos online at <http://news.a2schools.org>

Issue No. 16, June 7, 2010

Online classes offer a chance to get ahead

Summer registration under way for math, enrichment, Community Resource courses

From AAPSNews Service

Registration is under way in the Ann Arbor Public Schools for students who want to take online summer classes or personalized Community Resource courses for credit through the school district.

With more rigorous state high school graduation requirements, some students are finding the need to take a class over the summer to fit in other electives during the school year, explained Susette Jaquette, summer online program coordinator.

Registration will continue through 3 p.m. June 24 for the sessions, which run from June 21 through July 30. The courses are open to both Ann Arbor students and those outside of the district.

Although online summer classes have been offered in Ann Arbor since 2003, this is the first year the district is using all original, staff-designed courses, said Jaquette.

She said there are several reasons that students opt to take classes online during break.

Summer courses allow them more flexibility during the school year. “About half of those enrolled are math students who want to jump ahead a grade level (in math),” she said, adding that they must be “A” students in order to enroll in “Flexible Advancement in Mathematics” classes.

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Featured story



A parent volunteer works with Dicken Elementary School students during Super Science Day at the school. Representatives from the Ann Arbor Hands-On Museum were at the school with a variety of science experiment stations for students to try.

Hands-On help: Dicken Elementary students discover science is super

From AAPSNews Service

It was all hands on deck during the Dicken Elementary School Super Science Day May 21, where members of the Ann Arbor Hands-On Museum staff and parent volunteers showed students just how much fun science can be.

The visit was part of the museum’s Outreach Program (www.aahom.org/outreach), in which staffers

VIDEO online at a2schools.org

visit schools all over the state to do activities involving biology, ecology, physics, chemistry and math said David Lamb, outreach programs leader. “This is one component of what we do,” he said. “We do Family Nights and also do

See Dicken, page 4



Dicken Elementary students work with Oobleck at one of the science stations.

Logan sings out, forms new choir

VIDEO online at a2schools.org

From AAPSNews Service

A group of fifth-graders at Logan Elementary School have tuned up their voices this year, giving them a chance to sing together and consider studying vocal music when they move on to higher grades.

Music teacher Misty Noble started a fifth-grade choir at the school last fall, with about 16 students choosing to take part. They meet once each week for 25 minutes – with students giving up their lunch recess to be involved.

Noble said she floated the idea of the choir when the school year began and started working with the group in November.

There are no auditions; any fifth-grader can be involved, she said. Some of the students participate in other community singing groups such as the Ann Arbor Youth Chorale or a local church choir; others have no singing background but want to give it a try.

“I feel it’s an important tool here at this level, to get them excited about middle school so



they can continue singing,” she said. “They will have so many choices at middle school.”

Plans call for the choir to sing at the Logan graduation and they also performed at the band, orchestra and vocal school concert on June 1.

During a March performance, Noble said she allowed to students to pick their own musical number: They chose Michael Jackson’s “Beat It” and performed it with Jackson’s trademark white glove.

Noble said the camarade-

rie and friendships that have formed are just as important as the teaching of the music.

“That’s happening in here,” she said.

Addition of the new choir has excited younger students too, she said. Fourth-graders have already approached her about being part of the choir next year.

“Ideally, I would like a choir of about 35,” she said. “I’m hoping it will build next year. It takes a few years for a program to get going.”



Tappan students take part in a mock trial based on the story from “Tuck Everlasting.”

Tappan on trial: Students learn about law

VIDEO online at a2schools.org

From AAPSNews Service

David Baum returned to Tappan Middle School this spring with an eye to teaching students about the law.

The University of Michigan Law School assistant dean of students donned his robes to preside over a trial with sixth-graders at Tappan Middle School. A former Tappan parent, Baum served as part judge, part teacher as he guided them through the trial process.

“Do you want to ask that?” he queried of one student prosecutor during a direct examination. “Maybe word it more clearly to lead up to that point? You’re trying to get him to say what he saw when the gun hit.”

“Tuck Everlasting” was the basis for the series of “mock trials” at Tappan, where the story’s matriarch, Mae Tuck, is put on trial for killing the “man in the yellow suit” who was on the heels of discovering the Tuck family secret of immortality in an effort to sell it for profit.

Language Arts teacher Wendy Raymond brought the experience to her classroom. She does four, or more, student mock trials each year. She decided to use “Tuck Everlasting” for her sixth-graders thinking it would be a good fit.

“I’ve had other teachers ask about it. If we can collaborate, I’m hoping next year we can get more kids involved,” she said. This year, Raymond also started a Tappan Law Club, an extracurricular activity that brings real-life courtroom experience to middle school students.

On a related note, Raymond was recently honored to receive the Law Related Education Middle School Teacher of the Year Award from the American Lawyers’ Auxiliary of the American Bar Association. She will receive her award this summer in San Francisco.

A more detailed story can be found online.



The Ecology Club at Community High School was selected to work with the Huron River Watershed Council on 3-year project that teaches students scientific study of local waterways and connects their data results to community decisions. The students will evaluate the health of their local streams and develop skills to present their results and concerns to their communities. The project is funded by a \$225,000 grant from Toyota.

Leaving a colorful mark

Slauson 8th-grade art students continue tradition of wall murals

From AAPSNews Service

Wander the hallways of Slauson Middle School and, around every corner, there is a colorful surprise.

A total of 94 student-created murals of every shape and size can be found on every floor, from the 2003 mural of ocean, treetops and creatures that fills one stairwell from top to bottom, to the diminutive dinosaur that one eighth-grader is working on in the waning weeks of the school year.

Thirty-two eighth-graders in Tim Eiseman’s “Art and the Environment” class and some of his independent study art students design their murals and Eiseman picks a wall area for them to transfer their creativity onto. In these final weeks of school, student murals are well on their way to completion.

The murals are a project that has taken place each year for eighth-grade art students, Eiseman said. He said he lets them decide whether to work in a team or individually. This year, students are creating 17 new school murals at Slauson.

The murals are even taken into account when the school walls are painted for routine school maintenance, and the best ones are kept. “They get to leave a little bit of something behind,” Eiseman said. “This is their reward for doing a good job here.”

On an upper floor, Thad is creating the Master Chief from the Xbox game “Halo.” “I’ve always been known to doodle in math class,” said the eighth-grader, adding that he got his artistic talent from his grandma. “I’ve done my



A team of eighth-graders works on a mural about peace in a Slauson hallway. Below, a student traces and paints her design onto another wall.

entitled “Who Let the Bears Out?” a take-off on the school’s mascot and colors. She said she wanted to be in or near the gym, so that a lot of people passing by would see it. “I just wanted to do something totally different,” she said.

“Art is my love,” she added. “Every moment of every day I’m doing something. Ever since I was little, I’ve loved working with paints.”

A team of four students – Sofia, Samantha, Katie and Maddie – is creating a mural of five hands representing “peace among the five races of the Earth.” Samantha came up with the idea and Sofia sketched it. All four took part in the painting.

Eiseman said he allows the students flexibility and trust, since they are working at various points around the building and the class is spread out. And, he encourages creativity. “I try to take the kids, even if they see something they like, to change it and make it their own,” he said.

own comic books.

“It’s cool to see what other artists do. It’s a fun thing too – for us to leave our mark on the school. It’s a real opportunity.”

Near the gymnasium, Jennifer is working on her unique design



‘Art is my love. Every moment of every day I’m doing something. Ever since I was little, I’ve loved working with paints.’

–Jennifer, a Slauson Middle School eighth-grader painting a colorful mural near the school’s gymnasium

Enrichment courses in a variety of subjects are offered via the Internet

Online summer classes, from page 1

Others who didn't do well in a math class during the school year can take an online refresher to master it, she said.

Then, there are enrichment classes in a variety of subjects from more traditional History and English to new courses in Web Design and Financial Math to help students to move ahead in their school careers.

In addition to straight, online classes, this summer's program also offers two blended enrichment classes that include online and classroom components. New is a personal fitness class where most of the coursework is done online with the class meeting once per week at a variety of different health-oriented locations in Ann Arbor such as the YMCA or at hospital nutrition programs.

The other blended offering is a health class which features guest speakers as well as online modules. Both classes meet high school

requirements.

There will be an orientation for online summer students during the week of June 21. The program will require students to take proctored tests and will have counselors available at Skyline High School where the district's traditional summer school is being offered.

"I don't think there's any offering this extensive anywhere else," Jaquette said of Ann Arbor's online program. It started in 2002-03 with 18 students. Last year, 219 students were enrolled and taking online classes, she said.

Community Resource courses are another non-traditional way for students to earn high school credit by working with an "expert" from the community either off-site or in the school. CRs are monitored by certified teacher. "A CR is an opportunity for enrichment, exploration of career options, a chance to experience college curricula, an opportunity to

More information

■ **Online or Community Resource classes:** Students needing more information or wishing to sign up for online or CR courses can log in through the "Especially for Students" page on the district Web page: <http://a2schools.org> or through the "Community Resource Department" link on the Community High School page at <http://www.a2community.org/community.home/home>. Students may also speak with their guidance counselors or e-mail Jaquette at jaquette@aaps.k12.mi.us or call her at 734-994-2026.

■ **Traditional AAPS Summer School:** Registration for high school is June 21-24 at Skyline High School. Visit <http://www.aaps.k12.mi.us/ins.academics/traditional> for information and available courses.

do community service, or a way to accommodate a learning style preference," according to a description on the program's Web site.

This summer, a Volunteer Services CR class is being offered for credit through the Michigan Abilities Center. Students can become therapeutic riding center volunteers and help with riding, horse handling and side walking as well as program development, clerical work, special events, fundraising and animal care. Ninety hours of service are required.

Students may also create their own CR class and submit it for approval or request a specific one in Spanish, science or math.

Online summer classes cost \$250 for in-district students and \$292 for out-of-district students. Summer Community Resource classes cost \$190.

In addition to summer enrollments, students can also sign up for online and CR classes for the fall semester through Sept. 10, Jaquette added.

Dicken, from page 1

custom programs after school."

"They've been doing this for a few years," said Dicken parent Sana Shakour, who helped to organize this year's event for grades 1-5. "They're really good with the kids. They try to do new things and some of the favorites."

Hands-On Museum staffer Brian Cressman was challenging fourth- and fifth-graders at the Matter A Changin' station, exploring the use of solids and liquids to create gases. One of the most popular was Oobleck, which uses a mixture of corn starch and water that can exhibit properties of both a solid and a liquid.

Parent Tina Zrull, who has a 6-year-old at Dicken, was running the Oobleck table and having just as much fun. "I didn't get to be a kid until now," she quipped.



Among the 10 stations were Antacid Launch in which plastic canisters are launched into the air, Centripetal Swing in which water in buckets is swung around without spillage, Up Close and Personal using microscopes and Estuary Larry in which students recreate an estuary, where of salt and fresh



Above, Dicken students look through microscopes and, at left, make a mixture to create an estuary during Super Science Day at the elementary school.

water meet.

Activities took place in the school gym where students rotated through though the experiments in groups, spending 5 minutes at each activity station trying the experiment on their own.

"Hopefully it will get our kids excited about science," Shakour added.

Dicken kindergartners had their own Super Science Day on May 26, allowing them to enjoy age-appropriate science activities and work in smaller groups.